

Second Announcement!

Action Learning Action Research Association World Congress 2010

Melbourne, Australia
6th – 9th September

Plus two pre-congress skill-sharing days (4th - 5th)

Presented by ALARA and The Institute of Development Studies
in partnership with Borderlands and oases Graduate School



Participatory Action Research and Action Learning:

Appreciating our Pasts

Comprehending our Presents

Prefiguring our Futures

Like so many initiatives and approaches which appeared - seemingly - out of nowhere during the sixties and seventies, PAR, AR and AL have come of age and several generations of practitioners have meanwhile added their hearts', hands' and minds' work to the earlier traditions. Differentiations into 'applied fields', journals and second and third editions of 'handbooks', its epistemologies and ways of knowing, its methodologies and methods have become 'standard' fare in reference lists, workshops and course syllabi and these are all signs of a mature and, indeed, worldwide discourse.

As several of the originators of our 'movement' are retiring or have passed away recently, however, it also feels like a transition period and it seems time to take stock and listen to one-another across the generations. We need to remember the original impetuses and the responses PAR, AR and AL developed to them and critically examine what has happened with



these responses; how have they changed over time, together with the changing contexts we created and inhabit(ed)? It's time to critically but appreciatively assess our present practices, understandings and methodical ways of relating and to dream possible futures -an elemental task given the massive economic, ecological and social changes and predicaments we seem to stand at the confluence of...

A still tentative overview of the planned proceedings follows below; please get back to us at alara@borderlands.org.au with ideas, suggestions, offers of your and your network's involvement. We're looking forward to your input in the design and content of the Congress!

DAY 1: Whose (and what) shoulders are we standing on?

The origins of AL, AR, PAR. What are our legacies, our sources, historical, philosophical, practical, both in general and in specific areas of application?

Listening to and conversing about the *foundations* of the various participatory and action-based approaches to learning, researching, social change, organisational change, community and international development, welfare and health, the ecology, certain groups of people, etc. What can and should newer and younger practitioners still learn from the elders in our various movements how can be maintain and emulate the spirit of those who were then brave enough to try and make a difference... and did with vigour and much effect!

DAYS 2 & 3: *Our present(s)*

Where are we at today with AL, AR, PAR?

The 'States of the Arts' and how are we all contributing to and learning from today's stories...?

Two days of presenting and examining and reflecting on the present state(s) of play(s) with the second of those days organised by and spent in a location 'typical' or 'representative' of one of the several 'streams' of application of PAR, AL, process/systems/organisational development/international and community development, etc. Whilst the first of these two days would offer opportunities for plenary and panel presentations, workshops and inspired conversations and exchanges, on the second day, Congress participants will meet in various venues across the metropolitan area of Melbourne and home to institutions, organisations or agencies active in a particular field of application of PAR, AR, AL. These 'field-days' will be organised by local groups and networks active in the particular 'applied' field and will consist of plenary and workshop presentations, demonstrations, posters, whatever seems relevant and expressive of the particular directions PAR, AR and AL take in the respective field(s). A huge opportunity to learn and develop our skills reciprocally...!

Participants will return to the Congress venue (see below) for the Congress Dinner in the evening and into the night.

DAY 4: *Prefiguring:*

How to grow and evolve PAR, AL and AR in the hazardous times we inhabit?

We reflect about and explore questions of the next steps we should best take in the immediate future environments we co-create. How can we deliberately include up-and-coming generations of new practitioners and researchers and stay in conversation with 'older' generations? How to further develop the various approaches participants have shared during the previous three days and how to take them into our own 'habitats'? Exploring the newly emerging 'eco' environments and what we imagine the massive anticipated upheavals will 'do' to issues like social and global justice, social and ecological sustainability, 'new/old' forms and modalities of survival, micro- and macro-systems of (re-)production – from individuals, via families and communities to systems of 'secondary sociality': business and work/labour, education, health, recreation, etc.

And, finally, we would do best to not forget that the struggle with the established positivist paradigm and its supporters and beneficiaries is not over yet...

- Style -

As per usual in a participatory discursive context, we would like to minimise 'talking' heads opportunities, leaving some space for plenary talks/panels but spending much more time in discussion, conversation, etc. in more practice-based, issue-focused or context specific streams.

We certainly are also trying to keep costs down as much as possible given the distances most international participants will have to traverse to get to Melbourne. In that regard, we are certainly interested in additional partners and whilst we are having some 'advance' resources, additional funds and sponsorships are being sought after.

-Venue -

The Congress will be held at *Bayview Eden*, built around a beautiful late-1800s mansion, looking over Albert Park all the way to Port Phillip Bay. The venue has many woody welcoming 'spaces' for the main events, breakout rooms and places to sit and 'be' and converse. Catering and restaurants are on site, as well as a hotel for those who wish to stay at the venue. Situated at 6 Queens Road, Melbourne, it is less than 10 minutes tram from the city centre, surrounded by parkland and seems perfect for the World Congress next year...

From the World Congress Team

www.alara.net.au